

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*

Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic The Rock House, Edgewood Children's Center

Webster College For Boys; Soldiers' Orphans' Home; St. Louis Protestant
and/or common Orphans' Asylum; The Orphans' Home

2. Location

street & number 330 N. Gore

___ not for publication

city, town Webster Groves

___ vicinity of

congressional district #1 Hon. William Clay

state Missouri

code 29

county St. Louis

code 189

3. Classification

Category

___ district

☒ building(s)

___ structure

___ site

___ object

Ownership

___ public

☒ private

___ both

Public Acquisition

___ in process

___ being considered

☒ N/A

Status

☒ occupied

___ unoccupied

___ work in progress

Accessible

☒ yes: restricted

___ yes: unrestricted

___ no

Present Use

___ agriculture

___ commercial

☒ educational

___ entertainment

___ government

___ industrial

___ military

___ museum

___ park

___ private residence

___ religious

___ scientific

___ transportation

___ other:

4. Owner of Property

name Edgewood Children's Center

street & number 330 N. Gore

city, town Webster Groves

___ vicinity of

state Missouri 63119

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. St. Louis County Recorder of Deeds

street & number 7900 Forsyth

city, town

Clayton

state Missouri 63105

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title 1,100 Historic Bldgs. in St. Louis Co. has this property been determined eligible? ___ yes ___ no

date 1970

___ federal ___ state ☒ county ___ local

depository for survey records published: St. Louis County Dept. of Parks and Recreation

city, town Clayton

state Missouri

7. Description

Condition

☐ excellent

☒ good

☐ fair

☐ deteriorated

☐ ruins

☐ unexposed

Check one

☐ unaltered

☒ altered

Check one

☒ original site

☐ moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Rock House is a large, rectangular, gray stone building that was originally Italianate with broad eaves supported by large brackets, and a belvedere on top of the roof.¹ It measures 68 feet wide by 44 feet deep and is 30 feet high to the edge of the roof. On Thanksgiving Day, 1910, a fire started on the wood shingle roof and caused extensive damage to the building.² A newspaper photograph indicates that only the stone walls were left standing.³ The building was rebuilt right away and alterations were made that took away the Italianate character of the building.

The Rock House is now 2½ stories, with a gabled hip, shingle roof. There are three pedimented gable dormers on the front and one large dormer with a shed roof and two casement windows on the back. There are two small square casement windows in each of the gables at the ends of the building.

The wall treatment is squared rubble with stone lintels and sills for all of the windows. The center bay has large, double doors with a transom and is sheltered by a square wooden porch. The porch has a flat roof with an entablature and cornice, supported by free-standing wooden piers and wooden pilasters. The windows are all six-over-six. After the fire, a one-bay addition was added at each end of the original five bay front, extending the full three bays in depth, with access gained by eliminating one of the side windows. The second floor of each extension is an open porch with thick, square, rubble piers and wooden railings between them. Access to these porches is through double French doors in the center of the second floor (on both ends of the building) and by a single door at the north (front) end of the porch. The back third of the porches on both sides of the building has been enclosed with matching stone walls, each containing one window on the back and one on the side. Each porch also has a wooden staircase from the attic.

Four brick chimneys pierce the roof, one at each corner of the original building. They probably duplicate the originals, and they are corbelled out at the top.

Inside, the main floor of the building has been divided into administrative offices. The second floor is now two large apartments. A few details from 1910 still remain inside such as woodwork and a beautiful staircase. The third floor has a large wood-paneled room with many small closets cut into the panelling. It was designed as a dormitory and is now used for storage. The stone foundation can be seen in some parts of the basement, which has been divided into classrooms.

The Rock House sits in the center of 23 acres of open fields, orchard and a large community vegetable garden. The grounds contain two low, modern, stone and glass dormitories that are connected by a dining hall. Two large brick buildings contain special education classrooms, recreation facilities and offices. A maintenance garage is located behind the Rock House; a small brick building directly to the west of the Rock House was the pumphouse for a well, and further west is a small frame bicycle shop. Only the Rock House is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates Built 1852, rebuilt 1911 **Builder/Architect** built for Artemus Bullard

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Rock House is probably the oldest building in Webster Groves; the city was in fact named for it. It began as a prep school and college for boys, it was a soldiers' orphans' home during the Civil War, and finally the soldiers orphans home merged with the oldest protestant orphanage west of the Mississippi, making the Rock House home for as many as 110 orphans. It presently serves as the administration building for the Edgewood Children's Center, a special residential facility for emotionally disturbed children.

The Webster College for Boys was founded in 1852 by Dr. Artemus Bullard (b.1802), the dynamic minister of the First Presbyterian Church of St. Louis, and brother-in-law of Henry Ward Beecher.¹ It was to be a preparatory school and college, and Bullard named it for Daniel Webster, whom he greatly admired. The school attracted several outstanding professors from New England and the sons of prominent St. Louis families.²

When the Missouri Pacific Railroad went as far west as Kirkwood in 1853, a station platform was built near the school and called the "Webster" stop. As a village grew up around the station it too was known as Webster. When a post office was established shortly before the Civil War, it took the name "Webster Groves" to distinguish it from another Webster, Missouri.³

The Missouri Pacific reached Jefferson City in 1855. Artemus Bullard was among the dignitaries on the inaugural train, and he was killed when it plunged off the Gasconade River trestle.⁴ Webster College for Boys lost its momentum without its charismatic founder. Edward Avery, a math professor from Yale and a teacher and principal in the St. Louis schools, ran Webster College as a boys boarding school, but it closed at the outbreak of the Civil War.⁵

The Rock House then reverted to Carlos Greeley, who had donated the money to build it. In 1864, Greeley sold the house and its 20 acres to the Western Sanitary Commission for a soldiers' orphans' home. Children of both Union and Confederate soldiers were admitted, and the institution was partially supported by the state.⁶

By 1869, the need for an orphanage for the children of Civil War soldiers was practically past, so the Western Sanitary Commission merged with the St. Louis Protestant Orphan Asylum. The St. Louis Protestant Orphans Asylum had been founded in 1834, making it the oldest protestant orphanage west of the Mississippi.⁷ The orphans asylum prospered in its wholesome location in Webster Groves, and by 1876 there were 110 children living in the Rock House.⁸

9. Major Bibliographical References

1. Benner, Velma, Webster Groves. Webster Groves: n.d. (c.1950), including illustration.
2. Bradley, Marilynne. Arpens and Acres. Webster Groves: 1975, illus. p. 17.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 8.6 acres

Quadrangle name "Webster Groves, Mo. - III."

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

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4	2	7	5	3	4	0
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Zone Easting Northing

C

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Verbal boundary description and justification

Part of U.S. Survey 1953, beginning at the intersection of Rock Hill Road and the south line of James A. Marshall Estate Subdivision; hence East along this line 1,250 feet and encompassing the land 300 feet south of this line.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state Missouri code 29 county St. Louis code 189

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title J. Ann Morris

organization Webster College

date August, 1980

street & number 270 E. Lockwood

telephone 962-3526

city or town Webster Groves

state Missouri

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

☐ national ☐ state ☒ local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title Director, Department of Natural Resources
and State Historic Preservation Officer

date

For HCRRS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

date

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

ROCK HOUSE, WEBSTER GROVES

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 6

Page 1

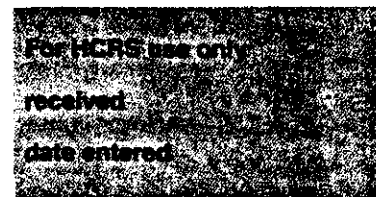
2. Missouri State Historic Survey
1981
Department of Natural Resources
Historic Preservation Program
P.O. Box 176
Jefferson City,

State

Missouri 65201

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet ROCK HOUSE, WEBSTER GROVES

Item number

7

Page 11

1. Annual Report of the St. Louis Protestant Orphans Asylum, 1896, frontispiece.
2. Annual Report of the St. Louis Protestant Orphans Asylum, 1911; William L. Thomas, History of St. Louis County (St. Louis: S.J. Clarke, 1911), Vol. 1, p. 358
3. The St. Louis Republic, "Protestant Orphans' Home a Super Asylum, Sheltering and Bestowing a Better Business Training on its Charges Than Average Home,"
November 8, 1914

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

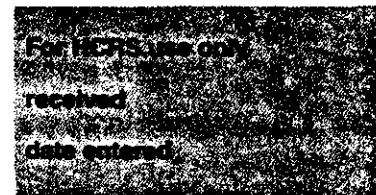
ROCK HOUSE, WEBSTER GROVES

Continuation sheet

Item number

8

Page 1



In 1888 the orphanage built two cottages and a large addition behind the Rock House. The two cottages, one for boys and one for girls, were a successful experiment in the New English and German cottage system of institution living.⁹

In 1943 the name of the institution was changed to the Edgewood Children's Center, a name suggested by the children because of the woods along the property line.¹⁰ In 1956, when the center merged with the Forest Park Children's Center, the cottages were torn down and replaced with more modern dormitories and classrooms. The Special Education Building was constructed in 1975, and in 1977 the Center merged with the Girls' Home of St. Louis.¹¹ Today the Edgewood Children's Center provides care and treatment for emotionally disturbed and learning disabled children between the ages of 5 and 17. Forty children are full-time residents and thirty receive day treatment.¹² The indomitable old Rock House serves as the administration building for the Edgewood Children's Center.

1. Clarissa Start, Webster Groves (Webster Groves:1975), p. 15
2. "Artemus Bullard" folder, "The Kate Moody File," a special collection located at the Missouri Historical Society.
3. "Webster Groves - Early History" folder, "The Kate Moody File." This explanation of the name "Webster Groves" is given by many sources, although the other Webster, Missouri is no longer extant.
4. Thomas Scharf, History of St. Louis City and County (Philadelphia: Louis H. Everts and Co., 1863), Vol. 11, p. 1915.
5. "Edward Avery" folders, "The Kate Moody File."
6. Scharf, op. cit.
7. Ann M. Morris, "The History of the St. Louis Protestant Orphans Asylum," The Bulletin of the Missouri Historical Society, Vol. 36, No. 2 (Jan. 1980), pp. 80-91.
8. Annual Report of the St. Louis Protestant Orphans Asylum, 1876.
9. Annual Report of the St. Louis Protestant Orphans Asylum, 1889.
10. Meta Gruner, Edgewood Childrens Center, Annual Report, June, 1949; Morris, p. 90.
11. Edgewood Children's Center Capital Fund Campaign, 1978.
12. Edgewood School; Special Education in a Treatment Setting (a brochure; no date).

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Inventory—Nomination Form**

ROCK HOUSE, WEBSTER GROVES

Continuation sheet

Item number

9

Page

1

3. Gill, McCune. Webster Groves. St. Louis: Title Insurance Corporation, 1949.
4. Moody, Kate. "The Kate Moody File," located at the Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis, Mo.
5. Morris, Ann M. "The History of the St. Louis Protestant Orphans Asylum," The Bulletin of the Missouri Historical Society, Vol. 36, No. 2 (Jan. 1980), pp. 80-91; illus.
6. Scharf, Thomas. History of St. Louis City and County. Philadelphia: Louis H. Everts and Co., 1883, Vol. II.
7. Start, Clarissa. Webster Groves. Webster Groves: 1975, pp. 13-18; illustration p. 16.
8. Thomas, William L. History of St. Louis County. St. Louis: S.J. Clarke, 1911, Vol. I, pp. 357-358.

ITEM NUMBER 11

PAGE 1

2. James M. Denny, Section Chief, Nominations-Survey
and State Contact Person
Department of Natural Resources
Historic Preservation Program
P.O. Box 176
Jefferson City

April 1981

(314) 751-4096

Missouri 65201

7361 III NW
(CREVE COEUR)

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

STATE OF
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

90° 22' 30"
38° 37' 30"

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730

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4278000m N.

710 000 FEET
(ILL.)

4277

MANCHESTER 8 MI.
1.3 MI. TO U.S. 61

(100)

4275

T. 45 N.

T. 44 N.

4274

35'

44

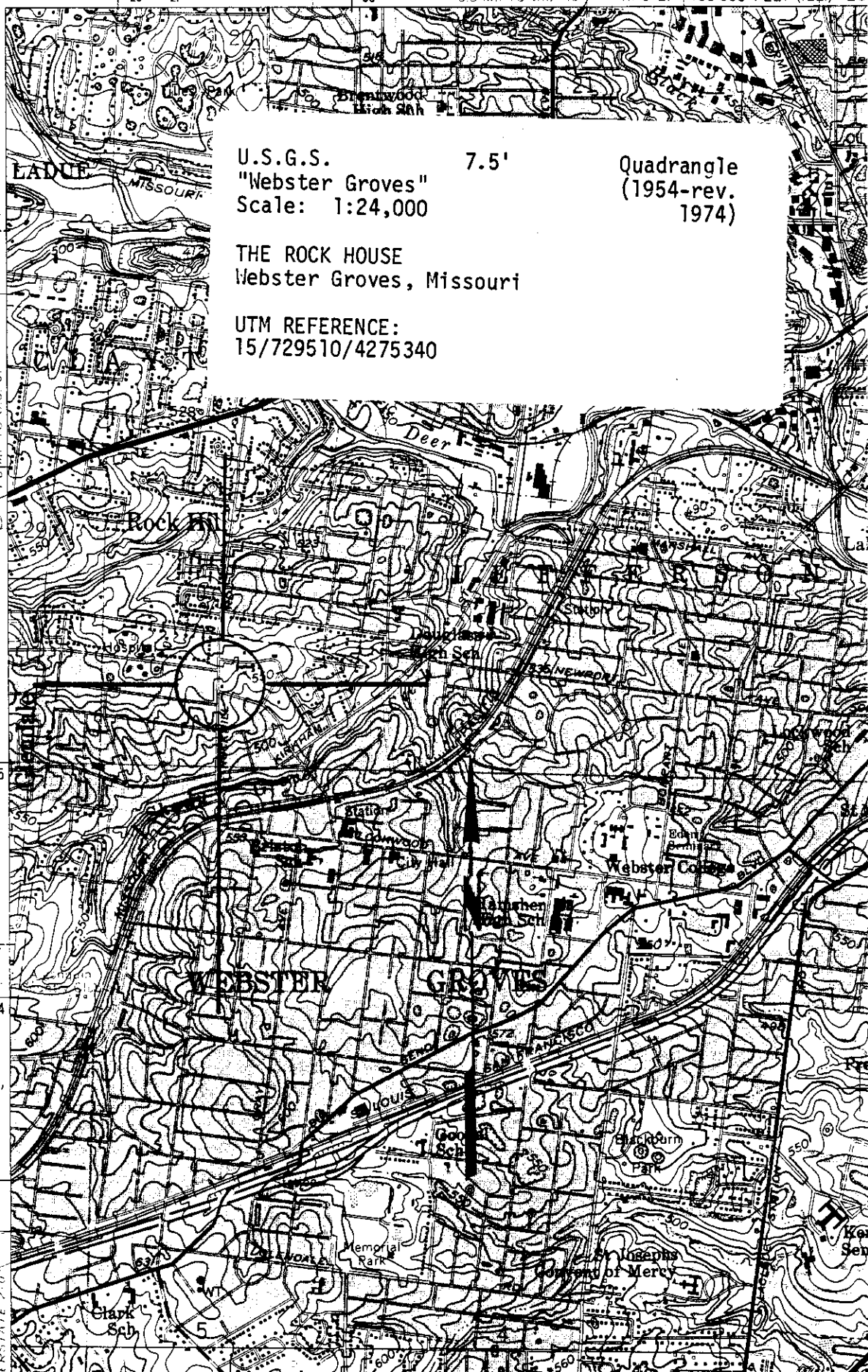
STATE 270

U.S.G.S. 7.5'
"Webster Groves"
Scale: 1:24,000

Quadrangle
(1954-rev.
1974)

THE ROCK HOUSE
Webster Groves, Missouri

UTM REFERENCE:
15/729510/4275340



The Rock House, Edgewood Children's Center
Webster Groves, Mo. 63119

Photo Credit: Esley Hamilton 9/80
Neg. Loc.: St. Louis Co. Parks & Recreation
1723 Mason Road, St. Louis, Mo. 63131

View of the Rock House from SE

